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BEHOLD, MORTALS, THE ETERNALS! CREATED BY COSMIC BEINGS CALLED THE CELESTIALS AND TASKED WITH SAFEGUARDING THE EARTH, THE ETERNALS ARE AN IMMORTAL GROUP OF HEROES WHOSE NEAR LIMITLESS POWER IS UNLIKE ANYTHING HUMANITY HAS EVER KNOWN!

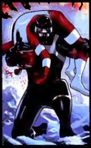




HAVING REPLACED *AJAK* AS THE CELESTIALS' COMMUNICATOR, *MAKKARI* COMMUNES WITH TIAMUT, *THE DREAMING CELESTIAL* WHO REVEALS TO HIM THAT THENA'S SON, JOEY, IS A HOST FOR A HORDE MOLE WHO HAS BEEN CONDUCTING A FULL SCAN OF OLYMPIA AND THE ETERNALS. ONCE DISCOVERED, THE MOLE ANNIHILATES JOEY'S MIND BEFORE ANYTHING CAN BE DONE.

THENA HAS LEFT *IKARIS* IN ZUFFENHAUSEN, GERMANY WHERE THEY ATTEMPTED TO RECRUIT PHILLIP STOSS, WHO THEY BELIEVE TO BE THE ETERNAL *PHASTOS*. THOUGH HE RESISTS THEIR IDEAS, PHASTOS IS PLAGUED BY RECURRING DREAMS OF A FORMER LIFE AS AN ETERNAL.





AS MAKKARI RACES TO OLYMPIA TO INTERCEPT JOEY, HE IS ATTACKED BY GILGAMESH THE FORGOTTEN ONE, WHO HAS BEEN BRAINWASHED BY AJAK TO DESTROY THE ETERNALS. MAKKARI SEVERELY BEATEN AND AS CLOSE TO DEATH AS AN ETERNAL CAN BE, AJAK ENTERS THE SCENE TO SPITEFULLY VAPORIZE HIS REMAINS.

IN SAN FRANCISCO, THE DREAMING CELESTIAL HAS INITIATEAD THE SONG OF THE SLEEPER IN RESPONSE TO MAKKARI'S DEATH, PLACING THE ENTIRE MORTAL WORLD INTO A SLUMBER FROM WHICH THEY MAY NEVER AWAKE.



ETERNALS No. 6, February, 2009. Published Monthly by MARVEL PUBLISHING, INC., a subsidiary of MARVEL ENTERTAINMENT, INC. OFFICE OF PUBLICATION: 417 5th Avenue, New York, NY 10016. $2.99 per copy in the U.S. in the direct market; Canadian Agreement #40668537. **Printed in the USA.** ALAN FINE, CEO Marvel Toys & Publishing Divisions and CMO Marvel Characters, Inc.; JIM SOKOLOWSKI, Chief Operating Officer; DAVID GABRIEL, Senior VP of Publishing Sales & Circulation; DAVID BOGART, VP of Business Affairs & Editorial Operations; MICHAEL PASCIULLO, VP Merchandising & Communications; JIM BOYLE, VP of Publishing Operations; DAN CARR, Executive Director of Publishing Technology; JUSTIN F. GABRIE, Director of Publishing & Editorial Operations; SUSAN CRESPI, Editorial Operations Manager; STAN LEE, Chairman Emeritus. For information regarding advertising in Marvel Comics or on Marvel.com, please contact Mitch Dane, Advertising Director, at mdane@marvel.com. For Marvel subscription inquiries, please call 800-217-9158.


SAN FRANCISCO, GOLDEN GATE PARK.
AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU, AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU...
ANTARCTICA, OLYMPIA, DOMAIN OF THE ETERNALS.
WHAT'S HAPPENING, ZURAS? IS THIS LIKE IN MADRIPOOR?
I DON'T THINK SO. WE HAVE HUNDREDS OF EMERGENCIES AND NO RESPONDERS.
OBSERVATION CENTER, SERSI AND ZURAS.
SOME KIND OF CONCERTED TERRORIST ATTACK...? SABOTAGE?
NO. LOOK AT THE PEOPLE...!
ARE THEY ALL DEAD?
NO, SERSI, LOOK THERE! THAT ONE'S BREATHING... THERE'S ANOTHER! THEY LOOK LIKE...LIKE THEY'RE...
--SLEEPING! HOLD ON!
SYSTEM! DETECT TRANSMISSION. WAVELENGTH CLASSIFICATION: CELESTIAL...
WAVELENGTH CLASSIFICATION: CELESTIAL... DETECTED. MODE: OMNI-DIRECTIONAL PSI-WAVELENGTH.
OMNIDIRECTIONAL AS IN GLOBAL?
AFFIRMATIVE.


FILTER AND DECODE TRANSMISSION TO MEDIUM FREQUENCY RADIO SPECTRUM 300 KILOHERTZ.
OUTPUT AUDIO THROUGH SYSTEM--
AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU, AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU...
GAHH!
SYSTEM, MUTE!
WHAT THE HELL WAS THAT?!
SERSI! THIS IS AJAK! RESPOND...!
WHAT NOW...?
AJAK, WHERE ARE YOU?
CHARCOT ISLAND. I FOUND MAKKARI.
IS HE OKAY?
NO, SERSI. IT'S BAD--REAL BAD. HE'S BEEN...
SSSFFFT



...KILLED.
MAKKARI!!


ZUFFENHAUSEN, GERMANY,
ZIFF-ENGEL MOTORWERKS TEST TRACK.
IKARIS.
SIEGFRIED? SIEGFRIED, WAKE UP!
THENA, RESPOND. WE HAVE A SITUATION HERE...
ANTARCTICA, OLYMPIA.
THENA'S QUARTERS.
THENA! RESPON--
WHAT DO YOU WANT?
WHAT IS WRONG WITH THEM?! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?!
THENA, EVERYONE OUT HERE JUST DROPPED. THEY'RE DOWN. ALIVE, BUT UNCON-SCIOUS...
DID YOU GET THAT? THEY'RE ALL DOWN EXCEPT FOR ME AND STOSS.
THENA, WHAT IS GOING ON...?
THENA...? RESPOND!
...
YOU! THIS IS ALL YOUR DOING! YOU AND YOUR WOMAN BARGE INTO MY HOUSE WITH THESE...THESE AB-SURD FANTASIES ABOUT PAST LIVES. YOU UPSET MY WIFE! YOU INJURE MY COLLEAGUES! YOU--
THE HELL WITH IT...
WHA--! LET ME GO!


UMPH!
RRRRRRRAAAAAAAAHHHHH!
HOW...HOW DARE YOU...LAY A HAND ON ME!
I WILL...I WILL SEE TO IT THAT... THAT YOU ARE...
OKAY. NOW. TELL ME WHO YOU ARE.
I...
...I... AM...


...I AM PHASTOS.
CHARCOT ISLAND, ANTARCTICA. AJAK AND SERSI.
BUT WHY WOULD GILGAMESH ATTACK MAKKARI?
DRUIG MUST'VE SHOCKED HIM AWAKE.
HE'S LEFT A TRAIL OF VICTIMS LIKE BREAD CRUMBS ALL THE WAY DOWN FROM BRAZIL.
I'VE NEVER...
I KNOW. IT'S A SHOCK TO SEE HIM THIS WAY. BUT HE'LL BE BACK, SERS.


I KNOW. IT WAS...STUPID OF ME TO WASTE ALL MY ENERGY TELE-PORTING OUT THERE...
YOU OKAY?
JUST...KINDA WRECKED. BUT I'LL BE GOOD. I JUST NEED... A FEW MINUTES TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER.
TAKE YOUR TIME...
"...MAKKARI'S PROBABLY WAITING FOR US RIGHT NOW IN THE ACTIVA-TION CHAMBER."
ANTARCTICA, OLYMPIA. ACTIVATION CHAMBER.
HR-RAH!!
KRAAKKK!


HAHH-AHAHAH--
HO, BETRAYER! HARDLY...
KRAK!
...THE HOME-COMING...
SBOOM!
...YOU EX-PECTED!
KRRASH!
SSSKRAKK!
--UNGH.
STAND DOWN, GILGAMESH!
TO DESTROY THESE MACHINES IS TO DESTROY OUR ONLY MEANS OF RESUR-RECTION!
ARE YOU COMPLETELY MAD?!


COMPLETELY MAD...? NO...
SSS-BOOOF!
...NOT COMPLETELY. YOU BLOATED OLD FOOL!
YOU DARE STRIKE ME? YOU AND YOUR DAEMON KIND SHALL ALL--
GILGAMESH.
I WOULD CONSIDER WELL MY OPTIONS IF I WERE YOU...
...FOR I HAVE LOST MY SON TODAY.
THEN REJOICE, SERPENT. FOR IN A MOMENT...


...YOU WILL JOIN HIM!
AARRRRGH--!
GUH!
RAH!


YOU WILL LEARN...
...THAT GOOD WILL ALWAYS TRIUMPH OVER EVIL...
...DEVIANT SCUM!!
KRAK!
DEVIANT?
THERE WILL BE NO MERCY.


SO BE IT!
GUH...



TH-THENA...?
REJOICE...I HAVE SAVED US...THE BETRAYERS...ARE ETERNAL...
...NO MORE.
HRK--
THENA...THE ACTIVATOR!
OH GOD, NO...
...MAKKARI.
DRUIG'S STRONGHOLD, THE DEMOCRATIC PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF VORZHEIKA.
AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU,
DRUIG! WHAT HAS HAPPENED?
AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU...
THE CITY BURNS! ALL THE MORTALS SLEEP AND CANNOT BE AWAKENED!


THE DREAMING CELESTIAL HAS APPARENTLY INITIATED SOME MANNER OF FAIL-SAFE.
"FAIL-SAFE"?! TO WHAT END?
GIVEN THE AICHO AICHO MINNO-MUMBO-JUMBO AND ITS REPETITIVE TEDIUM, I SUPPOSE IT'S SAFE TO INTERPRET IT AS A COUNT-DOWN OF SORTS.
COUNTDOWN TO WHAT?
I DUNNO, AKPAXA. BUT I WOULDN'T PUT MY MONEY ON SUNSHINE, RAINBOWS AND UNICORNS.
THEN WE MUST PLEAD WITH ZURAS TO COMPEL AJAK TO SPEAK TO THE CELESTIAL! TO END THIS MADNESS!
SILENCE.
THERE IS NOTHING TO BE DONE.
WHINE AND WHIMPER, IF YOU WISH, BUT DO IT OUT OF MY SIGHT!
THE ROOFTOP. MOMENTS LATER.
THE FOOLS STILL BELIEVE THAT AJAK IS THE CELESTIAL'S FAVORED SON...
BUT AJAK HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE COMMUNI-CATOR.
PERHAPS WITH THE OTHERS, BUT NOT THE DREAMING CELESTIAL. THAT ONE FAVORS MAKKARI.
HOW DO YOU KNOW?
IT'S SELF-EVIDENT. MAKKARI'S DEATH CLEARLY TRIGGERED THIS EVENT.
BESIDES...
...WHY ELSE WOULD AJAK MURDER HIM BUT FOR THE SAME REASON THE HUMAN, CAIN, CRUSHED HIS BROTHER'S SKULL WITH A ROCK...
...JEALOUSY.
AND IF THE WORLD SURVIVES THIS ABSURDITY, THIS FARCE, AJAK'S JEALOUSY WILL BE THE OLYMPIANS' UNDOING.
AND THAT, MY FRIEND, IS INFORMATION I PREFER TO KEEP TO MYSELF.
SO YOU--YOU'RE SAYING YOU WON'T TIP YOUR HAND...EVEN IF IT MEANS THE DEATH OF ALL OF US?!
NO.
I'M SAYING GIVEN A CHOICE BETWEEN OBLIVION, OR A LIFE OF ETERNAL SERVITUDE TO A RACE OF GRACELESS PRIMATES...


ANTARCTICA. THE ACTIVATION CHAMBER.
...I PREFER TO EMBRACE OBLIVION WITH BOTH EYES OPEN...
...UNSHACKLED.
WHAT'S WRONG WITH IT, PHASTOS?
WELL, LET'S SEE...
...THERE'S THIS BIG CRACK IN THE CASING OF THE ACTIVATOR WITH A SPEAR STICKING OUT OF IT, AND ALL THIS GLOWING STUFF HAS LEAKED OUT.
WHATEVER
I CAN SEE THAT.
SO WHY'D YOU ASK?
OKAY, HOW ABOUT THIS: CAN YOU FIX IT?
FIX A DEVICE THAT PERFECTLY REPLICATES ETERNALS, THEN SOMEHOW INTEGRATES THEIR CONSCIOUSNESS FULLY INTACT INTO THEIR NEW HUSK...?
IT'S HOPELESS, IKARIS.
BUT WE NEED MAKKARI NOW!
I KNOW THAT, BUT THE CELESTIALS DIDN'T EXACTLY PUBLISH A SHOP MANUAL FOR THIS THING.
DO ANYTHING, SERVE
IN ANY WAY I CAN
THERE'S NOTHING I CAN DO.
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO REESTABLISH COMMUNICATION WITH THE DREAMING CELESTIAL, BUT IT WON'T RESPOND...
THE DREAMING CELESTIAL HAS BEGUN "THE SONG OF THE SLEEPER."
THERE ARE 3,547 VERSES. ONCE IT CONCLUDES, A DIMENSIONAL CASCADE WILL BE ACTIVATED THAT WILL RETURN THE EARTH TO ITS PRE-INHABITED STATE.
TO ITS WHAT?
REBOOT, ZURAS. LOCAL SPACE-TIME WILL BE REVERSED 13.7 BILLION YEARS, BACK TO THE POINT WHEN THIS PLANET WAS A STERILE ROCK.
STOP THIS
KIND OF A...COSMIC DO-OVER.
STOP THIS


I CANNOT ABORT THE (SONG/ SEQUENCE/ FAIL-SAFE).
WHAT IS THIS PLACE?
THIS IS THE LACUNA.
THE AFTER-LIFE?
THERE IS NO "AFTER" OR "BEFORE." THERE IS ONLY ENERGY EXISTING IN VARIOUS STATES.
IF YOU CAN'T STOP THE SONG, WHY DID YOU BRING ME HERE?
I DID NOT BRING YOU HERE. YOUR PRESENCE IN THIS PLACE IS COROLLARY TO YOUR WILL AND IS INTEGRAL TO YOUR ENHANCED FUNCTION.
TO PROTECT MAK-KARI...
YES. AND THUS ABORT THE (SONG/ SEQUENCE/ FAIL-SAFE).
ME?!
YES. MAKKARI MUST BE (REGENERATED/ ACTIVATED) FOR ME TO CONTINUE MY IN-FORMATION UPLOAD OF THIS PLANET.
HE IS MY CON-NECTION TO THIS WORLD. IN ORDER TO ABORT THE (SONG/SEQUENCE/ FAIL-SAFE), YOU MUST FULFILL YOUR SECONDARY FUNCTION.
BUT THE ACTIVATION CHAMBER HAS BEEN DE-STROYED.
YES. MAKKARI MUST BE (REGENERATED/ ACTIVATED) IN ORDER TO ABORT THE (SONG/ SEQUENCE/FAIL-SAFE.)
DAMMIT! WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO?
MAKKARI MUST BE (REGENERATED/ ACTIVATED) IN ORDER TO ABORT THE (SONG/ SEQUENCE/FAIL-SAFE.)
STOP SAYING THAT!



SAY IT. SAY IT AGAIN...
MAKKARI MUST BE (REGENERATED/ ACTIVATED) IN ORDER TO ABORT THE (SONG/ SEQUENCE/FAIL-SAFE).
I...I...
...I UNDER-STAND.
I'VE KNOWN FROM THE VERY BEGINNING. IF MAKKARI IS DESTROYED
...AND IF THE ACTIVATION CHAMBER IS NEUTRALIZED, I MUST SERVE ITS FUNCTION.


FIRST, I HAVE TO USE MY PRIMARY POWER TO TRANSMUTE MYSELF INTO A PERFECT MOLECULAR-REPLICATION OF MAKKARI...
...EVERY CELL. EVERY STRAND OF GENETIC MATERIAL. EVERY REPRESSOR, ACTIVATOR AND SPECIFICITY FACTOR.
EVERY VESSEL MUST BE FLAWLESS OR IT WILL REJECT ITS INTENDED CARGO.
NOW THE DIFFICULT PART...
...THE DREAMING CELESTIAL'S ENHANCEMENTS HAVE GIVEN ME THE POWER TO ISOLATE MAKKARI'S ESSENCE FROM THE TRILLIONS OF OTHERS WITHIN THE LACUNA...
...TO REACH OUT AND CALL HIM TO ME...
...TO DRAW HIS ESSENCE INTO THE HUSK I HAVE CREATED...


...EVEN AS MY OWN ESSENCE VACATES IT AND I TAKE HIS PLACE IN THE LACUNA.
SAN FRANCISCO, GOLDEN GATE PARK.
AICHO AICHO MINNO MAU,
AICHO AICHO MIN--
MAKKARI...?
WH- WHERE IS SERSI?!


REST NOW, SERSI...
...YOU HAVE SERVED WELL YOUR CHARGES.
SAN FRANCISCO, GOLDEN GATE PARK.
LOS ANGELES, DODGER STADIUM.
Dodgers
Dodgers
Dodgers
WHAT THE HECK...?
NEW YORK, TIMES SQUARE.
SHEEZE... I BET THE D.B. BLAMES THIS WHOLE MESS ON ME...


MOMMA...?
...WHY ARE YOU CRYING?
"FASCINATING... THE POWER THESE CREATURES WIELD..."
...THAT EVEN A BEING SUCH AS THEE IS NOT IMMUNE TO INTERVENTION IN THEIR AFFAIRS.


PERHAPS YOU ARE DEFECTIVE. SHALL I ALERT THE FULCRUM?
THE BOY AWOKE WITH THE OTHERS WHEN THE (SONG/SEQUENCE/FAIL-SAFE) WAS ABORTED.
THE BOY WAS NOT ASLEEP.
HE WAS DEAD.
THE BOY AWOKE WITH THE OTHERS WHEN THE (SONG/SEQUENCE/FAIL-SAFE) WAS ABORTED.
YES. OF COURSE HE DID...
SO THE INNOCENT CHILD LIVES!* AND THUS, DEAR READER, CLOSES THE LAST CHAPTER OF THE NEWEST ASTONISHING CHRONICLES OF THE ANCIENT GUARDIANS OF THE EARTH! FOR THOSE INTREPID SOULS WHO HAVE NOT BEEN COMPLETELY DERANGED BY THE SECRETS REVEALED SO FAR, JOIN OUR DYNAMIC HEROES NEXT MONTH WHEN WE PLUMB THE DARK
"MYSTERIES OF THE VESTIBULE!"
CHARLES & DANIEL KNAUF WRITERS
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DAN BUCKLEY PUBLISHER
*The authors wish to humbly apologize for what may seem to be uncharacteristic over-sentimentality in this turn of events. However, we assure you, Joey's resurrection was not our doing, but that of The Dreaming Celestial. And we are duty-bound to serve Truth, no matter how unutterably maudlin, vapid and insipid she may be.


ZONE
AND
ROCAFELLA
MINUTEMEN